

BROADLY SPEAKING

Our man behind the gates, **Richard Jordan-Baker**, shares life living at Broadlands



There has been a lot written recently about old-fashioned boy's preparatory schools and also the good, and less good, effects of boarding at school in general.

It is fascinating to those of us who went through these systems, and I have had many discussions with various people on these subjects. True, in-depth research and psychology is for those who are experts but the layman who has 'been there and done it' still maybe has valid contributions to make.

At 19 years old I remember distinctly being admonished by my mother for being too independent. My response was based around the fact that it was, in effect, her who had made me so by providing a private, boarding education since the age of eight where the main elements of education were, amongst others, the ability to mix in all circles, manners, qualifications, and loyalty but probably ahead of all those, self-reliance.

Like many I have enjoyed lifelong friendships, know to stand up when a lady enters the room, have some qualifications and am more than happy in almost all company but I struggle to share my thoughts or plans, or heaven forbid, for many, many years, I would have rather failed miserably than asked for any help. Thankfully, I am better at this now, but it took work. In my recent reading, I discover this is such a common trait in boarding school children. I am however forever grateful to my parents for the sacrifices they made to get the fees together each and every term. Although, sitting on my trunk in the school yard, always last to be collected at holiday time, still rankles!

As I write in late-March the magnolia is in bloom, the beautiful Mt Fuji cherry trees are very nearly showing all their glory and my sweet peas are an inch-high in the greenhouse. The event diary is filling at Broadlands with *The Garden Show* in early June and our new event, *Balloons and Tunes* in the middle of July being the highlights. *The Garden Show* has moved to June to provide more opportunity to buy plants for the summer as well as hopefully better weather. All our events appear on our website.

Through some new exciting partnerships such as The Soul Camp, our corporate bookings are growing nicely with more and more enquiries, especially for company getaways and elegant client entertaining in the Orangery.

These bookings help us meet our agreed limited number of charity events such as, this year, Help for Heroes, Mountbatten Hampshire and the Romsey Rotary Marathon – all notable and hugely worthwhile occasions



There will be an opportunity at Broadlands to learn to draw horses with artist Georgea Blakey

Spring musings

where selfless souls exercise to raise money for those less fortunate.

Also, in May, is a new event, likely to be called *Adventures in drawing* – just 24 spaces will be available to learn to draw horses in the Orangery with ferociously talented equine artist Georgea Blakey. Book early!

Last but not least, singing has found its way back into my life. I am now very pleased and proud to be a member of the Winchester Philharmonic Choir and, last Saturday, sang in my first concert for 25 years that included the ever-glorious Fauré *Requiem*.

I could not have been made more welcome by a group of kind, musical, mainly Winchester, folk.

We performed in the wonderful New Hall, part of Winchester College under the leadership and tutelage of our rather

inspiring conductor Sarah Baldock. Thank you for having me and thank you to my friend Joan who encouraged me to join.

It is a privilege to sing with superb musicians, to be part of such an historic choir and to sing in such a beautiful setting. It is so good for us to sing.

I write, late as ever, having missed Elizabeth's deadline, listening to Bach's *B Minor Mass* that we will be performing in Winchester Cathedral next January.

My reading is very profound, deeply sad and difficult but important, I feel, to know and understand more – *Auschwitz* by Laurence Rees. I don't need to read any more about this dark bit of history though. To make the words come more easily this evening, I'm drinking Valdo Elevantum Prosecco – that I seem to have quite taken to. ●